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# Reunion all round

A particularly  
Private & Con-  
fidential Letter

TO

EVERYBODY

By the Author of  
"Absolute and  
Abitofhell"

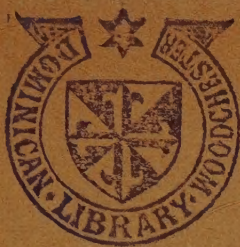


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TO  
DR. AND MRS. HENRY HEAD  
WHO ARE  
SCIENTIFIC ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE  
CLEAR THINKING  
AND  
HUMAN ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE  
DR. JONATHAN SWIFT

H. Knox, R.A. cl

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REUNION ALL ROUND.

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# REUNION ALL ROUND;

*Or, Fael's Hammer laid aside,  
and the Milk of Human Kindness  
beaten up into Butter and serv'd  
in a lordly Dish;*

Being a Plea for the Inclusion within  
the *Church of England* of all *Mahomet-  
ans, Jews, Buddbists, Brahmins, Papists,*  
and *Atheists*, submitted to the Con-  
sideration of the British Publick

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BY THEIR HUMBLE SERVANT  
THE AUTHOUR OF  
*"ABSOLUTE AND ABITOFHELL."*

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LONDON,

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*MCMXV.*







## REUNION ALL ROUND.

**I**T is now generally conceded, that those Differences, which were once held to divide the Christian Sects from one another, (as, Whether or no *Confirmation* were a necessary Ordinance of the Church) can no longer be thought to place any Obstacle against Unity and Charity between Christians; rather, the more of 'em we find to exist, the more laudable a thing it is that Christian men should stomach, now and again, these uneasy Scruples, and worship together for all the World as if they had never existed. There is no Progress in Humanity, without the surmounting of Obstacles; thus, we are all now agree'd that *Satan*, far from meaning any harm to our Race when he brought Sin into the World, was most excellently dispos'd towards us, and desir'd nothing better than that we,  
having

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6 *Heresies and Schisms very desirable.*

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having some good stout Sins to overcome, should attain an eventful and exciting sort of Virtue, instead of languishing for ever in that state of respectable Innocence, which is so little creditable to the Angels, who alone practise it. In like manner, all *Heresies* and *Schisms* are the very Condition of Christian Unity, and were doubtless designed to supply a kind of Zest to the tedious business of Church-going, on the same Principle that the Digestion of *Poultry* is improv'd, if they be allow'd to have a little Grit or Gravel in their Crops to assist them. So that there can be no more edifying Spectacle, to the rightly-constituted mind, than that of two Fellow-worshippers, one of whom is saying in his heart, Great is *Diana* of the *Ephesians*, and the other, O *Baal*, hear us, both which inward Intentions they express by a common Formula, when they profess openly with their lips, *That Honesty is the best Policy.*

Further, it has come to be seen, that *Bishops* and *Archbishops* are not, as was commonly suppos'd hitherto, the Vehicles of any extraordinary Grace, which they pass'd on one to another, like a *Contagion*, by the laying on of hands, but only another of these Obstacles, which make the Race of Life so agreeable a Pursuit. They exist to supervise our Doctrines, and find them unscriptural, to controul our religious Practices, and

and forbid their Continuance, thus enabling us to *snatch a fearful Joy* while we are about 'em: in short, to give the Christian Profession that Spice of Martyrdom, which it has so sorely lacked since the Abolition of the *Amphitheatre*. However salutary this Interference be, it is plain that it is of the nature of a Luxury; and we shall, therefore, be content to forgo the enjoyment of it, if the *Non-conformists* should demand the Sacrifice as a Condition of Reunion with themselves.

I conceive, then, that within a few years from the present Date, the Division of Christians into Sects for purposes of Worship will have utterly disappear'd, and we shall find one great United Protestant Church existing throughout the civiliz'd World. I would not deny but there might be some few Difficulties of Adjustment attending the Venture; as, that the *Fifth Monarchy Men* might withhold their Assent from the Scheme, unless we would all make it a matter of Doctrine, *That the last Judgement is to be presently expected*; which knowledge would cast an intolerable gloom over the more part of our Pleasures, and create a lack of Publick Confidence on the *Exchange*. But I cannot doubt, upon a little cool Reflection, we should rid ourselves of these fanciful *Megrims* of sectarian Particularity; and there is gain to be shewn on the other side; for example, it may  
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## 8 *Proposal for a Symphorodox Church.*

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be anticipated the *Seventh Day Adventists* will demand the Observance of *Saturday* as well as *Sunday* as a Feast of the Church; and we shall thus have two days instead of one in every seven on which we can lie abed till Noon, over-eat ourselves, go out driving in the Country, and dine away from Home under colour of sparing trouble to our Domesticks.

There is some doubt in this connection, whether or not the churches of *Russia* and *Greece*, arrogantly styl'd *Orthodox*, can have any part in the Church of the future. Their very Title is, it must be confess'd, most horrid and repellent to our ears; for how can a man proclaim his own Tenets to be orthodox, without thereby implying, That other People's Opinions are less likely to be true, than his own? We must have no more of this; I leave it to themselves to pitch upon a new designation, with the Suggestion that they would do well to alter their present Style to that of *Symphorodox*, which is to assert no more, than that they find their own Doctrines helpful. As to our old Quarrel about the Clause *Filioque*, it will clearly have disappear'd at the time of which we speak: for, as Tradition avers that the *Apostles*, when they first form'd a Creed, did not all profess it together, but each supply'd his Contribution, *Peter* leading the way with *I believe in God*, so in this new Church nobody will be expected

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to recite the whole Creed, but only such Clauses as he finds relish in; it being anticipated that, with good Fortune, a large Congregation will usually manage in this way to recite the whole Formula between them. And indeed these Oriental Christians already enjoy to the full, in *Russia* at any rate, one of the most blessed Privileges of our own Church, which is, to have their religious affairs entirely controul'd by the State; and this will prove undoubtedly a great Bond of Union, when the *Greeks* have been induc'd to assign the same Position in the Management of their Religion to the *Soldan* of *Turkey*, as the *Russians* assign to the *Czar*.

But it is not to be suppos'd, that such an Arrangement can be enter'd into without some Undertaking from the Eastern Churches to set their own house in order: to translate, for example, their *Liturgy* into the modern Vernacular Tongue; or at least to provide that it is, like our own, not more than three hundred years out of date: to dispense with all Mummings, Bobbings, Bowings, Shutting and Opening of Doors, Kiffings, Gesticulating, etc.; to put all their *Ikons* high up on the Wall, so as to destroy all peril of Worship; and, finally, if they cannot but let off Fireworks on *Easter Day*, (as their present beastly Custom is), to make sure that they do it only for Purposes of *Illumination*.

Thus it may be hop'd we shall complete the Reunion of all Christians: the Considerations so far brought forward are so obvious and plain to all Men of Sense, that I am well-nigh asham'd to have dwelt so long upon them; the Question to be rais'd in the present Treatise is rather, whether we do right to confine these beneficent Operations to the Christian or *Trinitarian* Sects only, or whether we cannot advantageously extend them to other religious Systems which have, till now, from a lack of proper Reflection, been held to be incompatible with Christianity. And here I do not refer to the *Unitarians*; for it is to be fear'd that if these Persons have gone out of their way to separate themselves from the other Sects on the Ground of a Doctrine so little taught in our Church, and so little believ'd in, as that of the *Trinity*, they must be a pettifogging, cantankerous set of fellows, that prize their own Opinions too highly, to become Parties to our Policy of Reunion. But where Disagreement from ourselves about the Nature of God arises, not from any wilful Spirit of Dissension, but from Difference of early Training or national Tradition, nay, of Climate, Atmosphere, and geographick Conditions; where there are people in the World, who have enjoy'd so little the Advantages of our modern Enlightenment, as to be unaware that it is not Religion, or Patriotism, but only the

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the prospect of commercial Advantage, that justifies a Nation in going to War; there, I would humbly venture to urge, there may still be hopes of a good Understanding, when a few Scruples have been remov'd, and a few Doubts explain'd away.

It was customary with our Ancestors, to designate *Mahomet* by the title of *The False Prophet*. A more modern and more temperate Judgement will not allow us to contend further, than that he was unduly positive in his Assertions. And there is this to be said for him at least, that he was a good, sound *Protestant*; and that his quarrel with the debas'd Church of his Time was mainly about its heathenish *Mariolatry*, and the unduly strict views it held about *Marriage*; all which should make us conceive a Sympathy and Respect for him, as in some ways the Forerunner of our own *Reformation*. Further, it cannot be deny'd, that the Mahometans admit the historical truth of many of those Facts, upon which the Christian Religion is, or was until the last half-century, suppos'd to be founded. True, they have hitherto failed to invest the Facts with the same theological colouring we are accusom'd to put on them, and it must be confess'd they shew a certain Reluctance to avow the most elementary Articles of our Faith. But is this Difficulty final? Let five *Christian*, and five *Mahometan*

*Mahometan* Theologians be closeted together for a week to discuss these controverted Doctrines, the Christians explaining to their less enlighten'd Co-assessors what sense such Doctrines are really meant to convey; and I for one shall be vastly surpriz'd if, at the end of the week, the Mahometans are not prepar'd to accept *the Athanasian Creed* in the same sense, in which it is maintain'd by some of the most highly-plac'd Ecclesiasticks of our own Country.

It is, I apprehend, in Matters of Discipline rather than of Doctrine we shall need a certain amount of *give and take* before our Differences can be settled. Christian Men are accusom'd to be content with one Wife, and even in *America* with one at a time; Whereas in *Turkey* he would be thought a very chicken-hearted Husband who had not endow'd four Ladies simultaneously with his own Surname. This might seem to be an irreconcilable Difference of Principle; but, fortunately, where Numbers are concern'd, Mathematicks provides us with a ready Solution of the Difficulty, by the Method of Averages. Nor does it need the brain of a profound Scholar to determine, that in the Church of the future we shall all be conscientious *Bigamists*; thereby avoiding at once the Expence of a *Harem*, and the Monotony of our present European System. We shall also obviate at one blow the difficulty of  
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finding Wives in *Baghdad*, and the difficulty of finding Husbands in *Balham*. We shall, of course, adopt at the same time the Mahometan Rule, by which a Man may at any time turn his Wife out of doors, upon finding her displeasing to himself, and take a new one, modifying it only so far, as to extend the Privilege equally to the Wife, as to the Husband: in this Way we shall meet a long-felt Demand on the part of the lower Classes in our Country, as well as recognizing an existing Practice in the case of their Superiors in Social Rank. At the same time, we shall abolish those accounts of Divorce Court Proceedings in our News-sheets, which are admitted by everyone to be injurious to Publick Morals.

The same Principle will naturally rule our Dispositions about the sacred Hierarchy. Mahometans, as well as Christians, have their several Grades of Clergy, and it is to be suppos'd that we should avoid all invidiousness and Suspicion of Favouritism here, if we call'd the Ministers of the new Church alternately, according to their Rank, by Western and Eastern Designations. Thus, for example, we might call them (in descending Order):

*Archbishops*

*Pashas* (corresponding to *Bishops*)

*Archdeacons*

*Mullahs* (corresponding to *Rural Deans*)

*Incumbents*

*Incumbents*

*Hadjis* (corresponding to *Unbeneficed Clergy*).

The Services in our Churches (or *Mosques*) would be characteriz'd by a like Spirit of Accommodation. It would be plainly impossible, to ask Christian men to remove their Boots on entering the Building, like the *Mozlems*; but we could make a point of having a substantial *Mat* at the door, so that they could at least wipe them; and it would be a pretty Conceit to have the Word, *Salve*, worked on the Mat, in token of our readiness to welcome all, whatever their Opinions, to Publick Worship. On the other hand, Reciprocity demands, that we should not put any Yoke on the Conscience of the Oriental, by insisting on his taking off his Turban: we should expect him instead to carry in his Hand a second Hat, (preferably a Silk one), so that when he reach'd his Pew he might not be without something to pray into.

Some Diffensions might be expected to arise, about the Reading of the first Lesson. It is an unfortunate mark of the Barbarism which still triumphs in the East, that the Mahometans have a very considerable Respect for their Sacred Book, the *Coran*; and treat it with a Reverence, which our Western Enlightenment has long outgrown. Our Plea is, that since we have nowadays so little use for the *Old Testament*,  
Readings

Readings from the *Coran* should be substituted for it in Divine Service. And if any man object, that this might lead to a superstitious Belief in the Facts therein alledg'd, I would point out for his Comfort that in a very short Time that Critical Study will come to be expended on the latter Book, which has hitherto investigated the former, with such happy Results; and consequently within twenty years' time we should be in no more danger of giving Credit to the Miracles of *Mahomet*, than we are in now, of stomaching the History of *Joshua*.

It is a degraded Practice of the Mahometans, at certain fix'd hours of the day to bring out a little Praying-carpet, and kneel on it with the Face turn'd Eastward, to engage in Prayer. It is manifest that any Christian man would sooner die than be seen at his Devotions, unless it were at the time of Publick Service. This Custom, then, would of Necessity be disallow'd, especially as in great Cities it would have the effect of continually obstructing the Traffick. But if any felt it difficult to break themselves of this untidy Habit, I would not deal harshly with them; rather, they should be suffer'd to carry about a small Joint-stool, and be allow'd thus to meditate in any of the less thickly populated Districts, under colour of admiring the Scenery. But this is not all: for the Mahometans obstinately insist, when performing  
such

such Devotions, on turning towards the East, that is, towards the *Sun-rising*; towards the *Beginnings* or *Origins* of Things, in short, towards the dispiriting Recollection of the Past. This, (thank God!), is not our way in *Europe*; if any of us should be so strangely affected, as to want to pray in one Direction more than another, it would certainly be towards the West, the Land of the *Sunset*, the glorious Prospect of the remote Future, which is, by all accounts, to be a time of great Happiness, Virtue, and Prosperity. We should substitute for *Orientation*, what we might call *Occidentation*; and address ourselves, not towards *Mecca*, but towards *Chicago*. The spirit of our religious Compromise thus plainly demands, that every such Devotee should carry a *Compass* about with him; and when the time came for his superstitious observances, face as nearly as possible in the direction of the *Magnetick Pole*.

There is another Custom prevailing in Mahometan Countries, of such doubtful Advantage that we could not agree to conform to it without earnest Consideration; I mean, the Custom by which people are woken in the Morning by a Fellow bawling out from the Top of a *Minaret*, to the Effect (unless my memory plays me false) that *Allah is great*. It will seem shocking to minds habituated to our Western Standards of Taste, that these *Muezzins*, as they are call'd, should

should give a Pronouncement so public to so controversial a Statement. We could not allow it; for it would manifestly cause the most grievous Distress of Conscience to any *Atheist* or *Agnostick* who happened to be within Ear-shot. Yet is something to be said for the Practice in general Outline; who has not wished, as he turn'd over in bed at eight of the clock on a Sunday morning, that there were some less noisy means of awakening a few devout Women, than making a great *Clanging of Bells*, as if the whole City were afire? Would it not be well to introduce the Muezzin into our Church-towers, and at the same Time to see to it that his Announcement was both less provocative, and more appropriate; that he should either shout out, *The early Bird catches the Worm*, or, if he were musical, even intone to some simple Anglican Chant the Words:

*Early to Bed, and early to rise,  
Makes a Man healthy, wealthy, and wise?*

There are besides one or two particular Sects among the Mahometans, who might give us Trouble; as the dancing *Dervises*, who insist upon making Dancing into a sort of religious Ceremony. We should have to shew these very plainly, that the exercising of the Soul is one thing, and the exercising of the Legs another. It might even be well to forbid their  
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executing any Dance except the *Russian* ones; if they only practis'd these, it would speedily rid their Dancing from any Association of Religion, or even of Morality.

There are the *Assassins*, too, who hold it to be just and lawful to kill a man in virtue of a Disagreement about Religion, and did lately murder a man very horribly in the city of *Paris*. Yet these should be surely treated, not as publick Enemies, but as erring Brethren: that is, they should be admitted to full Communion, but we should lose no opportunity of advertizing them of the Disadvantages of their peculiar Tenets, by means of preaching to them in Sermons: reminding them, I mean, that the practice of Murther frequently begets dangerous consequences for the perpetrator of it, by the establishing of *Blood-feuds*; and (taking even a higher Ground) that where the practice becomes common it creates a general Uncertainty about the Tenure of Life, and renders the Maintenance of publick Peace and Order a far more difficult affair than it would otherwise be. Doubtless in a very short time they would have learn'd to take a more lenient view of doctrinal Irregularities.

There is one Obstacle to Reunion with the Mahometans still remaining, which I confess at first sight seems wholly insuperable; viz., that the Mahometans hold it sinful and unclean  
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to eat the Flesh of the Pig, or to drink fermented Liqueurs. And though our Countrymen might be prevail'd upon to abandon whatsoever else in the interests of Peace, there are two Privileges they will never relinquish except at the Sword's point, and namely, *Bacon* and *Beer*. Such practical Considerations as these mean very much more, to a business-like Nation such as we are, than any abstract theory or any matter of ecclesiastical Principle. Yet even here there is a *Via Media* to be thought upon, which I very earnestly recommend to the Attention of all those who have the best Interests of Religion at heart. Would it not be possible to add a Rubrick in the *Book of Common Prayer*, following immediately upon the Rubrick which directs Abstinence on *Fridays*, and Fasting during the forty days of *Lent*, to this effect: "And note, that in no circumstances whatever is it permissible on any Day of the Year to eat Bacon, Ham, Pork, or Sausages, or to drink any kind of Fermented Liqueur; and if the Curate find his People so doing, he shall present them to the Bishop as contumacious Sinners and rotten Members of the Church of Christ." This will surely be calculated to ease the Consciences of our Eastern Brethren, since it will shew them clearly what the Mind of our Church is upon this matter; whereas, on the other hand, we shall have no Scruple  
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at all about the eating of the Pig, but will continue to eat our Pork Chops on every Day in the Year, with the same Assurance as we eat Mutton on all *Fridays*: in short, no one will be at all affected in his manner of life, except a few scurvy *Highchurchmen*, who impiously try to gain Merit in the sight of Heaven by observing these and other like Ordinances impos'd by the Founders of our Church, instead of contenting themselves with a spiritual Fast, which is far more acceptable to God, and far less prejudicial to the Digestion.

This same Prescription would, it is clear, vastly lessen our quarrel with another religious Sect—I mean, the ancient People of the *Jews*. Altho' it is to be doubted, whether the stubborn Prejudices of this Nation would be wholly satisfied, even by so signal a mark of our Determination to sacrifice everything in the cause of Unity. Yet I would not despair, even here, of some better Understanding. For myself, I cannot praise the Suggestion of my friend *Dr. Honeybotham*, that we should endeavour to bring them to a more Christian mind, by explaining to them (what is now prov'd to the satisfaction of all our Scholars) that the Law was not given to Moses by the dispensation of Angels upon Sinai, but rather botch'd together by an ignorant fellow, who had nothing better to do, at the time of the Babylonish Captivity: that it is no  
business



business of ours, to conform ourselves to the fanciful Scruples begot in the brain of such an one by an attack of the spleen. This whole Propofal has an Air of *Propagandism* about it, which can commend it very little to the Enlightenment of the present Age, since it might be misconstru'd into a Declaration, that one man's religious Opinions are in some way better than another's.

It would be more congruous with the Principles on which we have hitherto proceeded, if we would undertake to make further Concessions on our own part. It is a Commonplace of Theologians in these Days, that in all cases of Schism and Division among Christians either Party is right in what it *asserts*, and wrong in what it *denies*. And it is plain that in the first great Schism of the Christian Church, an account of which is set down in the fifteenth chapter of the *Acts of the Apostles*, the denials were all on *Saint Paul's* part, and the affirmations on the part of his Adversaries. Nor am I afraid of any Taint of Unorthodoxy, when I humbly submit the Propriety of rescinding the Decrees of the first Council of *Hierusalem*, as we have to all intents already rescinded those of *Chalcedon*, *Ephesus*, *Constantinople*, and *Nicea*.

It may be thought by the careless Observer, that we shall have even less Difficulty in arranging our terms of Peace and Amity with the Religions

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## 22 *Comfortable Doctrines of Buddhism.*

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Religions of the further East, as *Buddhism*, *Brahmanism*, and the like. For already in our own time we see many Men and Women of Fashion shewing a Tenderness for the mystical Doctrines of these Sects, keeping *Mabatmas* instead of Domestick Chaplains, and cultivating the Inner Life so far as the Pursuit does not interfere with Pleasure, Wealth, and the Enjoyment of polite Society. Already we see *Ganges* flowing into the *Medway*, and it is the part of every philosophick Mind to discern these Signs of the Times. For we are all accustom'd to comfort ourselves with the reflection, *Magna est Veritas, et praevalabit*; is it not then plain, that the Prevalence of any Idea is the Measure of its Truth? Thus it might well be thought that all this cult of Oriental Poetry, and Conjuring, and Fortune-telling, which is now only practis'd by *Mistress Chloe* in her Closet, must contain such a Groundwork of Truth as to be like to commend itself, in a few years, to *Dryasdust* in his Study. There are, indeed, very comfortable Doctrines to be found in these Systems; as, That what a man is, is condition'd, for the most part, by what he was in a previous Incarnation: this quits us of much moral Responsibility; and there are not many Men so sensitive, as to feel bound to defend the Honour of a *former Self*. And again, that all Existence tends ultimately to Annihilation; which

which prospect is a deal more comforting to most of our *University Professors, Merchant Princes, and Company Promoters*, than anything which was promis'd them by traditional Christianity.

But it is to be observ'd, that all these Doctrines rest on a most disquieting *Major Premiss*, very much adher'd to in the East, *viz.*, *That all Matter is evil*. Such a Position will hardly commend itself to the Thinkers of our Time. For, if Matter be evil, how can it be that among an enlighten'd People like ourselves, as is very obviously the case, the Exploits men can achieve with their Fists, their Feet, or their Muscles are far more anxiously recorded and read of than any Activity of their Brains? That we undergo Exercises every Morning for the perfecting of our Bodies, and never reflect, from one week's end to another, upon the case of our Souls? That we seek bodily Health by every possible means, and plead it upon every possible Occasion as an Excuse for our Derelictions? That our Eating and Drinking become every day the subject of more anxious Cogitation? That the getting of Riches is our Passion from Birth, our ruling Principle in Marriage, and our only Hope for the Respect of Posterity, after our Death? All these Considerations will prove to the satisfaction of any Philosopher, that if Christians have given up every other Article  
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of the Creed, we have still a lively Hope in the Resurrection of the Body.

How then are we to come to any Agreement with those, who openly profess that the Body is something to be neglected and mortify'd, and that Matter is an evil? I answer, *That where there's a Will there's a Way*; and that if we will only consent to admit, for the sake of Charity, that all Matter is evil, we can quite easily safeguard ourselves against any untoward Consequences that might follow from the Doctrine, by adding, That it is a necessary Evil. The Horrors of War, Poverty, and ill-paid Labour; the Delays and Expence of the Law; the Party-system; the Licentiousness of the Press; the unequal Distribution of Stipends among the Clergy—these and a hundred other such Features of our Polity we all confess, with one voice, to be evils; but we go on to add, *That they are necessary evils*, meaning thereby that the Speaker (for one) has no intention of moving a Finger to amend them. If this were clearly understood, I cannot see that we should be much the losers by the adoption of an Eastern way of thinking.

Yet, God forbid that we should encourage in our own Country any of those barbarous Institutions, by which these benighted *Enthusiasts* attempt to rid themselves of the Body, and its very agreeable Incumbrances; as, by the Institution

tution of *Monasteries*, which have made the Religion of the *Buddhists* almost as much suspect, as the corrupt Church of the Middle Ages, and, in fact, little better than it; or by allowing crack-brained Fellows call'd *Fakirs* to sit by the Road-side with no visible Means of Subsistence, begging their Bread, scantily cloath'd, and afflicting themselves with lying upon Beds of Spikes, as if they would rebuke the more Common-sense Manners of the Passers-by. We might indeed allow them to ask for Money, if they would proffer Laces and Almanacks in Return for it, and so conform to the Regulations of the *Police*; but *Spike-beds* I would have altogether forbidden: and as for the Monks, if they would not come out again into the World, I would shut them up for their lives in Mad-houses, to cure them of this arrogant craving for Silence, Confinement, and Solitude.

“But” someone will urge “if we hope to persuade those who at present disagree with us to forgo their superstitious Practices for the sake of Reunion with the *Church of England*, we are surely transgressing outside the range of practical Politicks into sanguine and visionary hopes, not likely to be realiz'd. If the *Buddhists* could be so far prevail'd upon, is there not some prospect of Reunion with the *Idolaters*, *Fetish-worshippers*, and Believers in *Mumbo-Jumbo*; nay, even with  
“the

“the *Papists* themselves?” And here, I conceive, we have arrived at the very Pith of our present Contention. We have much to look for from the gradual softening Influence of Time, from the Progress of civiliz’d Ideas, and the wider Diffusion of Knowledge. And I (for one) am so perswaded of the Mission of our Church to unite all the Religions of the World under its own auspices, that I do not hesitate to assert what may seem at first sight a very distasteful Possibility, namely, that at some time it will be our Duty to consider on what terms we shall accept the Submission even of the *Church of Rome*. And I would beg of my Readers, not to be unduly prejudic’d beforehand; but to take a lenient view of the abominable History of that Institution, and as far as possible to reconcile themselves to the Prospect of a closer Relation with those, who are at present tainted by the Infection of its impious Tenets.

I know we are commonly told, That this will never be achiev’d, by Reason of the Extreme Obstinacy and Perversity of this Sect, which will never allow them to come to any Conditions. But this Obstinacy, I apprehend, is nothing else than the Confidence of Numbers: they are at present a pretty numerous Body; and they will soon be brought to see Reason when they find their own Adherents becoming rarer every day. That this will speedily happen,  
Science

Science itself gives us warrant to avow; for we know now that all Survival in the World is a *Survival of the Fittest*, and that two Instincts chiefly make an Organism fit to survive, namely the *Will to Live*, and the Desire to propagate its Kind. The *Church of Rome* pays the highest Veneration to *Martyrs*, and to *Celibates* or *Virgins*, thereby attesting its contempt for these two great Instincts, which alone enable a Race to persist; it might, therefore, be allowed to become extinct by the force of its own ignorant Delusions; but I hold it a more charitable thing to arrest this Decline, when it has once fairly set in, and invite the Survivors, many of 'em good enough Fellows at heart, into the all-embracing Unity of our National Establishment.

True, hitherto these Symptoms of Decline have been slow to manifest themselves, and it is even alledg'd that *Popery* is on the Increase in certain parts of the World, notably in our own Island, in *America*, in *Australia*, in *France*, and in *Holland*. But it is not to be suppos'd, that any such observ'd Augmentation of Numbers is due to Conversions; on the contrary, it has been repeatedly prov'd, That nobody is ever converted to the Roman Catholick Religion; in *England*, *America*, and *Australia* the whole cause of Increase is the Immigration of *Irishmen*, and it cannot be doubted but that a few more  
Statisticks

Statisticks would shew to everybody's satisfaction, that *Irishmen* are emigrating in very great quantities both to *France* and to *Holland*. These melancholy Facts bear Testimony both to the Prolifick Character of a Race, which can thus stock five Countries with *Papists* from year to year; and also to its singular Obstinacy and Bigotry, in that it carries its Religion about with it, like a part of its Luggage, and must needs attempt to transplant it into an alien Soil, where it was never meant to flourish. Such opinionated Arrogance must be firmly dealt with; and I would therefore suggest, in the interests of the Reunion of Religions, that upon his Conquest of Ireland our great Commander, Sir E—— C——, should put all *Papist* Children to the Sword, and we should make it a criminal Offence for the future, that any *Papist* should be allowed to marry, or have Issue: the Offence itself to be punish'd with Death, and the resulting Issue to be expos'd on some Hill-side, lest it should grow up infected with the gross Superstition of its Parents.

The Hibernian *Hydra* thus amputated, the remaining *Papists* of the World, seeing their Numbers daily dwindle and decrease, would speedily come crying to us for Admissiion; and it is here that I would appeal to my Countrymen not to use any undue harshness in receiving their Allegiance. I would not, I mean, altogether



gether treat their Orders as null and void, but only degrade their Clergy by a single step in the Hierarchy; their Bishops to count as Priests, their Priests as Deacons, their Deacons as Lay-readers. Nor would I extract from these, by way of a Declaration of Loyalty to our Church, anything more than an Affirmation of general Dissent from the Doctrine contain'd in the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*. The *Pope* himself I would allow to take rank as a retir'd Missionary Bishop, thus leaving him the *Insignia* of Power without any Sphere in which to exercise, or Income with which to abuse it. The *Cardinals* I would disperse among the Common-rooms of *Oxford* and *Cambridge*, where they could exercise to the full their Talent for Intrigue without having any serious effect, for good or ill, upon the Destinies of the Nation. In Discipline, Doctrine, and Devotion, we should of course compel our newly-return'd Prodigal Brethren to conform entirely to the *Book of Common Prayer*, and, for fear of any Recrudescence of superstitious Orthodoxy among us as the result of their Inclusion, take an Oath of them that they unfeignedly disbeliev'd all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

I cannot apprehend any grave consequences following from such a course of enlighten'd Charity upon our part; and if any should still have scruples about the Wisdom of it, I would  
mention

mention that the sum of money we should add to our Revenues as well by the increas'd Sale of *Bibles*, *Prayer-books*, and *Hymn-books*, as by the proceeds of the dismantling of *Cathedrals*, *Churches*, and *Monasteries*, would amply suffice to form a Fund for a publick Training of Athletes.

The Differences at present existing between the various Persons who believe in a God being thus happily ended, we should be the more free, finally, to consider the Problem of Reunion with the *Atheists*. And here it is to be notic'd, that whereas the Sectaries of one Religion differ from those of another over a whole Multitude of Points, as Niceties of Ritual, Quibbles of Doctrine, Forms and Postures in the Recitation of Prayer, etc.; in the Case of the *Atheists* we have only one single Quarrel to patch up, namely, as to whether any God exists, or not. If we could but ease their Consciences on this matter, it is clear they would have no difficulty in accepting our Forms and Fashions of Worship, having no inherited prejudice in favour of any other. There would be no straining at *Gnats*, if they could but be brought to swallow the *Camel*. I submit it, therefore, with all deference to our Theologians, whether they could not find it possible to allow, that as God is Immanent and yet Transcendent, so we cannot see the whole Truth, but only an Aspect of the  
Truth,

Truth, until we have reconcil'd ourselves to the last final Antinomy, that God is both Existent and Non-existent? We, who are conscious of the Supreme Being as Existent, and those others who are conscious of Him as Non-existent, are each of us looking at only one Half of the Truth, one *Side*, as it were, of the *Shield*; and we can surely hope that when we have study'd each other's points of view, and come to understand them a little better, by common Discussion and common Worship, we shall all of us recognize the Divine Governour of the Universe as One who exists, yet does not exist, causes Sin, yet hates it, hates it, yet does not punish it, and promises us in Heaven a Happiness, which we shall not have any Conscioufness to enjoy.

It would be superfluous to add, what great Advantage will be deriv'd from the Absence of any religious Diffension whatever in the World; as, that there will be no Division within Families, no Tests in the appointment of Ministers, and no religious Matter to offend the eye in our daily News-sheets. I commend these Considerations very earnestly to the Attention of the Publick, calling upon them in the name of Humanity and Progress to see that this Scheme is carry'd out, whether or no any of the various Sectaries concern'd like the Proposal made; and not to allow the fact that they  
do

do not happen to have any Religion or any Morality of their own make them in any way backward to arrange the moral and religious Affairs of other People. Thank God, in these days of Enlightenment and Establishment, everyone has a right to his own Opinions, and chiefly to the Opinion, That nobody else has a right to their's. It shall go hard but within a century at most we shall make the *Church of England* true to her Catholic Vocation, which is, plainly, to include within her Borders every possible Shade of Belief, *Quod umquam, quod usquam, quod ab ullis.*

FINIS





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